



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
LANSING



March 17, 2003
RESUBMITTED: April 14, 2003

Memorandum to the Natural Resources Commission:

SUBJECT: Squirrel Season Dates

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

Small game hunters have requested that the hunting season dates for fox, black, and grey squirrels be extended to include the entire months of January and February, statewide. The current squirrel season opening and closing dates (September 15 and January 1) have remained unchanged since 1985.

Although overharvests of fox squirrels can occur in small woodlots and public hunting areas, the consensus among wildlife managers has been that hunting has relatively little impact on fox and grey squirrel populations. Minnesota (February 28), New York (February 28), Pennsylvania (February 8), Wisconsin (January 31), Ohio (January 31), and Indiana (January 31) have later season closing dates than Michigan.

Because the earliest litters appear in late January (most births occur in mid-March), extending the squirrel hunting season may be a controversial issue. Some hunters may object to shooting nursing or pregnant females. However, season length has had a minor effect on squirrel numbers in states with extended hunting seasons.

Two options are provided for consideration. Option 1 will extend the squirrel hunting season closing date from January 1 to February 1 (31-day extension); Option 2 extends the season through March 1 (59-day extension).

Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information only at the April 2003 meeting of the Natural Resources Commission. This item appeared in the April 28, 2003, Calendar and is eligible for approval on May 9, 2003. We are now recommending that it be acted upon at this meeting.

Rebecca A. Humphries, Chief
Wildlife Division

Richard C. Asher, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

George E. Burgoyne, Jr.
Resource Management Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

K. L. Cool
Director

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 4 of 2003

Under the authority of sections 40107 and 40113a, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, being sections 324.40107 and 324.40113a of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources ordered that effective May 10, 2003, the following section of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

3.507 Squirrels, open season; exception; daily and possession limits.

Sec. 3.507. (1) The open season for taking fox, black and grey squirrels shall be September 15 to March 1.

(2) The daily limit shall be 5 fox, black and grey squirrels combined and the possession limit shall be 10 fox, black and grey squirrels combined.

Issued this 9th day of May, 2003.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Keith J. Charters, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

K. L. Cool
Director